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SUBJECT: FRF AGREES (POSSIBLY) TO REJOIN AMANI PROCESS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Apollinaire Malu Malu and members of the International Facilitation (IF) traveled to Kamombo, South Kivu July 22 to persuade the leadership of the FRF (Forces republicaines federalistes in French) to rejoin the Amani process. The FRF agreed to return to the process should the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) stop brutalizing the local population and if allegations against three specific officers are investigated. However, it remains unclear whether the FRF agreed to rejoin the process unconditionally, or if their return is conditioned on satisfaction of these demands. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Amani Program coordinator Apollinaire Malu Malu and members of the International Facilitation (to include EU Special Representative Roeland van de Geer) traveled to Kamombo July 22 to meet with the FRF leadership. The purpose of the meeting was to persuade the group to rejoin the workings of the Amani process.

¶3. (SBU) Malu Malu and van de Geer emphasized that the FRF must rejoin the process, as participation is "equivalent to being for peace" and non participation is "equivalent to being for war." USAID Goma officer Nicholas Jenks exhorted FRF, as IF does with all armed groups, to stop brutalizing the population.

¶4. (SBU) The FRF reiterated their principal concerns to Malu Malu and the Facilitation, namely human rights abuses committed by the FARDC against the local population. These have included the rape and murder of women, the killing of children, and pillages. The FRF cited three FARDC officers with direct involvement in these crimes: a Major Santos, a Major Mikenso, and a Captain Birume.

¶5. (SBU) Nevertheless, at the end of the meeting, the FRF said that they would rejoin the process, but two concerns need to be addressed. The first is that the FARDC must do everything possible to stop its soldiers from brutalizing the population. The second is that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GDRC) and FARDC need to investigate FRF allegations against the officers named previously.

¶6. (SBU) Malu Malu and the Facilitation then traveled to Bukavu for a meeting with South Kivu governor Muderhwa and 10th military region commander Masunzu, at which the South Kivu police commissioner and MONUC South Kivu staff were also present. The meeting, however, was overly formal and Malu Malu was forced to do the "real work" afterwards.

¶7. (SBU) Malu Malu reported to USAID Goma officer Jenks later that Masunzu had agreed to call the three aforementioned FARDC officers to Bukavu and investigate the FRF charges against them; Masunzu is also in agreement to pull the FARDC out of the high plateau (Note: the FRF sees itself primarily as defender of the Banyamulenge community of the high plateau area of South Kivu. End note) In addition, Malu Malu reported that Interior Minister Kalume is sending a police battalion to Bukavu for acclimatization, and it will be deployed soon to the plateau.

18. (SBU) Comment: The FRF's apparent commitment to rejoin the Amani process is a positive step, and it should be noted that the group has backed off from its previous conditions that the FARDC be withdrawn from the high plateau and Masunzu removed from his post. At the same time, in discussions with Malu Malu following the day's meetings, it remained unclear to all if the FRF agreed to rejoin the process unconditionally, or if their return is conditioned on satisfaction of the concerns outlined in paragraph five. End comment.

GARVELINK